



Public Service Announcement

Back-to-School Safety Tips

Provided by your

Local Emergency Management Office



Back-to-School Safety

The following health and safety tips are from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

MAKING THE FIRST DAY EASIER

- ✦ Remind your child that they are not the only student who is a bit uneasy about the first day of school. Teachers know that students are anxious and will make an extra effort to make sure everyone feels as comfortable as possible.
- ✦ Point out the positive aspects of starting school: It will be fun. They'll see old friends and meet new ones. Refresh their memory about previous years, when they may have returned home after the first day with high spirits because they had a good time.
- ✦ Find another child in the neighborhood with whom your youngster can walk to school or ride with on the bus.
- ✦ If you feel it is appropriate, drive your child (or walk with them) to school and pick them up on the first day.

BACKPACK SAFETY

- Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Pack light. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the student's body weight.
- Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
- Consider a rolling backpack. This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs, and they may be difficult to roll in snow.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL





Review the basic rules with your youngster:

School Bus







- 🚌 Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- 🚌 Do not move around on the bus.
- 🚌 Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing.
- 🚌 Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.

Car




- 🚗 All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.

-  Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when they have reached the top weight or height allowed for their seat, their shoulders are above the top harness slots, or their ears have reached the top of the seat.
-  Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age). This means the shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat; the lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, not the stomach; and the child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with their legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down.
-  All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles. If you must drive more children than can fit in the rear seat (when carpooling, for example), move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.
-  Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. You should limit the number of teen passengers to prevent driver distraction; this is even required by law in many states. Do not allow your teen to drive while eating, drinking, or talking on a cell phone.

Bike

-  Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.
-  Ride on the right, in the same direction as auto traffic.
-  Use appropriate hand signals.
-  Respect traffic lights and stop signs.
-  Wear bright colored clothing to increase visibility.
-  Know the "rules of the road."



Walking to School

-  Make sure your child's walk to a school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
-  Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
-  Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.

BULLYING

Bullying is when one child picks on another child repeatedly. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. It can happen at school, on the playground, on the school bus, in the neighborhood, or over the Internet.

When Your Child Is Bullied

-  Help your child learn how to respond by teaching your child how to:
 1. Look the bully in the eye.
 2. Stand tall and stay calm in a difficult situation.
 3. Walk away.
-  Teach your child how to say in a firm voice.
 1. "I don't like what you are doing."

2. "Please do NOT talk to me like that."
 3. "Why would you say that?"
- 👤 Teach your child when and how to ask for help.
 - 👤 Encourage your child to make friends with other children.
 - 👤 Support activities that interest your child.
 - 👤 Alert school officials to the problems and work with them on solutions.
 - 👤 Make sure an adult who knows about the bullying can watch out for your child's safety and well being when you cannot be there.

When Your Child Is the Bully

- 👤 Be sure your child knows that bullying is never OK.
- 👤 Set firm and consistent limits on your child's aggressive behavior.
- 👤 Be a positive role model. Show children they can get what they want without teasing, threatening or hurting someone.
- 👤 Use effective, non-physical discipline, such as loss of privileges.
- 👤 Develop practical solutions with the school principal, teachers, counselors, and parents of the children your child has bullied.

When Your Child Is a Bystander

- 👤 Tell your child not to cheer on or even quietly watch bullying.
- 👤 Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- 👤 Help your child support other children who may be bullied. Encourage your child to include these children in activities.
- 👤 Encourage your child to join with others in telling bullies to stop.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE

- 🏠 During middle childhood, youngsters need supervision. A responsible adult should be available to get them ready and off to school in the morning and watch over them after school until you return home from work.
- 🏠 Children approaching adolescence (11- and 12-year-olds) should not come home to an empty house in the afternoon unless they show unusual maturity for their age.
- 🏠 If alternate adult supervision is not available, parents should make special efforts to supervise their children from a distance. Children should have a set time when they are expected to arrive at home and should check in with a neighbor or with a parent by telephone.
- 🏠 If you choose a commercial after-school program, inquire about the training of the staff. There should be a high staff-to-child ratio, and the rooms and the playground should be safe.